

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W

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FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2502

S E C R E T ABIDJAN 2646

EXDIS

FOR AF ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE SCHAUFLE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IV

SUBJECT: HOUPHOUET SUPPLIES FURTHER INFORMATION

ON HS MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT CARTER

REF: (A) ABIDJAN 2537, (B) ABIDJAN 2559

1. IN EFFORT TO GLEAN FURTHER INFORMATION ON CONTENT OF PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY'S WRITTEN MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT CARTER, WHICH HOUPHOUET HOPES IVORIAN AMBASSADOR AHOUA WILL BE ABLE TO DELIVER TO PRESIDENT PERSONALLY (REF A), I CALLED HOUPHOUET'S CLOSE PERSONAL ADVISOR GEORGES OUEGNIN YESTERDAY AFTERNOON AND ASKED HIM WHETHER IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO OBTAIN INDICATION OF MAIN POINTS ADDRESSED IN LETTER. I EXPLAINED THAT THESE ADDITIONAL INSIGHTS WOULD BE HELPFUL TO WASHINGTON IN PREPARING RESPONSE AT APPROPRIATE TIME. OUEGNIN SAID THAT HE HAD NOT SEEN TEXT OF LETTER HIMSELF BUT WOULD ASK HOUPHOUET WHETHER FURTHER INFORMATION WAS AVAILABLE.

2. SOMEWHAT UNEXPECTED RESULT OF THIS INFORMAL DEMARCHE ON MY PART WAS TELEPHONE CALL FROM HOUPHOUET ASKING ME
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TO COME AROUND TO SEE HIM AT HIS RESIDENCE IN COCODY
LAST NIGHT.

3. HOUPHOUET BEGAN CONVERSATION BY OBSERVING THAT IT WAS NOT "CUSTOMARY" TO PROVIDE TEXT OR SUMMARY OF MESSAGE BETWEEN CHIEFS OF STATE IN ADVANCE OF DELIVERY. I INTERJECTED QUICKLY THAT I UNDERSTOOD THIS COMPLETELY BUT

BELIEVED THAT SOME FURTHER INDICATION OF SUBJECTS COVERED IN HOUPHOUET'S LETTER WOULD ASSIST WASHINGTON IN LAYING GROUNDWORK FOR EVENTUAL RESPONSE THAT WAS AS FORTHCOMING AND PERTINENT AS POSSIBLE. WE UNDERSTOOD, I SAID, THAT LETTER WAS INTENDED FOR PRESIDENT CARTER PERSONALLY AND, AS I HAD TOLD HOUPHOUET THE DAY BEFORE, I WAS SURE THAT HIS VIEWS WOULD BE WELCOMED AND WOULD RECEIVE THE CLOSE ATTENTION THEY DESERVED IN WASHINGTON.

4. HOUPHOUET THEN SMILED AND SAID THAT HE HAD ASKED ME TO COME SEE HIM BECAUSE HE HAD NOT WISHED TO DISCUSS THE CONTENT OF HIS LETTER ON THE PHONE OR TO CONVEY DETAILS TO ME THROUGH INTERMEDIARIES. HE THEN SAID , "YOU CAN TELL WASHINGTON THAT THE LETTER IS ABOUT A PAGE AND A HALF LONG AND THAT IT EXPRESSES MY THOUGHTS ON THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND IN AFRICA." HIS VIEWS ON THE MIDDLE EAST, HE CONTINUED, HAD BEEN FORMED NOT ONLY ON THE BASIS OF HIS RECENT CONVERSATIONS WITH PRIME MINISTER RABIN AND THE PALESTINIANS BUT ALSO AFTER MAKING A SERIES OF SOUNDINGS IN CAIRO, TUNIS, ALGIERS AND RABAT. THE CONCLUSION HE HAD REACHED WAS THAT NO NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT OF THE ARAB-ISRAELI PROBLEM WAS POSSIBLE UNLESS THE ISRAELIS ACCEPTED THE INEVITABILITY OF A PALESTINIAN STATE. IN HOUPHOUET'S OPINION THERE WAS NO WAY AROUND THIS ISSUE. IT HAD TO BE FACED BY THE ISRAELIS AND HE BELIEVED SIGNIFICANT CONCESSIONS COULD BE OBTAINED BY THE ISRAELIS IF THEY WERE PREPARED TO SWALLOW THE CONCEPT OF A PALESTINIAN STATE.

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5. HOUPHOUET THEN REPEATED WHAT HE HAD TOLD ME THE DAY BEFORE (REF B), NAMELY THAT THE TIME WAS RIPE FOR A MIDDLE EASTERN SETTLEMENT BUT A MASSIVE PUSH IN THAT DIRECTION WAS REQUIRED AND ONLY THE UNITED STATES HAD THE STRENGTH, BOTH MORALLY AND PHYSICALLY, TO SUPPLY IT. "ONLY JIMMY CARTER CAN DO THIS," HE CONCLUDED.

6. HOUPHOUET COMPLETED THIS PART OF OUR CONVERSATION BY SAYING THAT HE ALSO ADDRESSED IN HIS LETTER THE "PROBLEM OF AFRICA." HE INDICATED THAT HIS VIEWS ON SOUTHERN AFRICA WERE THOSE WHICH HE HAD MENTIONED TO ME IN OUR EARLIER CONVERSATION (REF B). WITHOUT INDICATING SPECIFICALLY WHETHER HE RAISED ECONOMIC ISSUES IN HIS LETTER, HOUPHOUET COMMENTED THAT HE WAS CONCERNED NOT ONLY ABOUT THE HARDENING OF POSITIONS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA BUT ALSO BY ECONOMIC QUESTIONS. HE MENTIONED IN THE LATTER CONNECTION THAT AFRICAN STATES, INCLUDING THE IVORY COAST, NEEDED MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE TRANSFER OF RESOURCES AND TECHNOLOGY FROM THE DEVELOPED STATES. "WE CANNOT FIND PATENTS IN THE STREETS OF ABIDJAN," HE SAID. "WE MUST

RELY ON YOU TO SHARE WITH US THE TECHNOLOGY WHICH WILL MAKE OUR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SELF-SUSTAINING."

7. I SHALL REPORT BY SEPTTEL ADDITIONAL COMMENTS MADE SUBSEQUENTLY BY HOUPHOUET ON SUBJECTS NOT REPEAT NOT RELATED TO HIS LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT.

8. COMMENT: I CAME AWAY FROM THIS SECOND CONVERSATION WITH HOUPHOUET MORE CONVINCED THAN EVER THAT HE ATTACHES GREAT IMPORTANCE TO AHOUA'S DELIVERING HIS LETTER PERSONALLY TO PRESIDENT CARTER. HOUPHOUET SEES THIS AS A WAY TO OPEN A DIRECT LINE OF COMMUNICATION TO THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT. KNOWING HIS WAY OF DOING BUSINESS, HE WOULD BE UNLIKELY TO OVER-USE OR ABUSE THIS LINE OF COMMUNICATION, ONCE ESTABLISHED, BUT ITS EXISTENCE WOULD BE VASTLY REASSURING TO HIM BOTH SYMBOLICALLY AND IN PRACTICAL TERMS. HE IS ACCUSTOMED TO PLAYING HIS CARDS
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VERY CLOSE TO THE CHEST AND IT IS OBVIOUS THAT ONLY A FEW ADVISORS IN WHOM HE HAS COMPLETE CONFIDENCE ARE EVEN AWARE THAT HE HAS ADDRESSED A LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT. FROM THIS STANDPOINT, THE CONTENT OF THE RESPONSE HE RECEIVES MAY BE LESS IMPORTANT THAN THE MANNER. HE WANTS TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY AND BELIEVES THAT HIS OWN RECORD OF CONSTRUCTIVE ACCOMPLISHMENT AT HOME AND ABROAD, AS WELL AS HIS OBJECTIVITY, SHOULD RENDER HIS VIEWS ON SUBJECTS OF MUTUAL CONCERN WORTHY OF THE PRESIDENT'S PERSONAL ATTENTION. STEARNS

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